

GERTRUDE. THE BELEAGUERED CASTLE. THE TWO PORTRAITS. THE EQUAL DOOM. THE STAGE BOX BEAUTY.

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GERTRUDE.

" Gertrude," said a low, but manly voice, as the hand of the speaker opened the glass door that led into an apartment on the ground floor of a neat little country parsonage " Gertrude."

At a table, within the chamber, sat a fair-haired maiden, her cheek resting on one hand, while, with the other she caressed an Italian greyhound, that nestled on her lap. As the door was softly unclosed, the animal sprung forward, and with a low whine of delight welcomed the intruder. Gertrude started to her feet, and, in a voice which ill concealed the joy his presence imparted to her sad bosom, exclaimed:— " Is this well done, Hector? I thought you had been on board the Windsor Castle by this time!"

"On board the Windsor Castle," he replied reproachfully, " on my voyage to the East, without other leave-taking than the cold formal farewell in presence of our relatives—without plighting to you my troth , and receiving yours in return;—no, no, Gertrude; you could not—you did not think so meanly of me."

A sad smile was her only reply, as Hector re-seating her, placed himself by her side.

"I had ascertained, before leaving the Rectory, that my presence on board would not be required for a few days; but kept my own counsel, and bidding a final adieu to your respected father, at the termination of the first stage, saw him set out on his homeward way. Lingered among our romantic haunts till night should shield me from prying eyes, I approached the rectory. The stillness within and without the house assured me that all had retired to rest, and traversing the shrubbery with cautious steps, I approached this side of the building, and never did the sea-tossed mariner hail with more intense joy the friendly port that offered him a refuge from the tempest, than did I the ray of light which streamed from your casement. I doubted not a cordial reception from the whole household; but the scene of to-day must have recurred tomorrow; I must again have uttered a constrained adieu—again repressed the overflowings of a bursting heart; and departed an unblessed wanderer to another hemisphere."

The feelings of Gertrude were too intense for utterance ; she leaned her head on the shoulder of her lover, and burst into tears. The soothing of affection, a brilliant future, depicted by the pencil of hope, in no long time, however, calmed the agitation of her soul; and the first rays of the rising sun found the youthful pair still engaged in converse.

Six years previously to this period, Colonel St John, on being ordered to India, had entrusted his motherless boy to the care of Dr. Montgomery, the rector of St. Jude, his school-comrade and college-chum; and faithfully had the worthy divine fulfilled the sacred trust. He regarded Hector with an affection little less lively than that he felt for his own Gertrude. As the youthful pair attained to the age of adolescence, the rector perceived, or thought he perceived, a growing affection between them, which he feared might ripen into love. He lost not a moment in communicating his suspicions to Colonel St John, who, by the next packet, set his heart at rest, by requesting him, if he approved of his boy as a son, to let things take their course; but the spring arrivals from India brought an unexpected summons

for Hector to join his father at Madras. For a moment, the confidence of the Rector in the honor and sincerity of his early friend wavered; but the same conveyance brought him an explanatory letter from Colonel St. John, in which he stated, that having obtained a lucrative, though not a permanent, situation in the civil department of the Government, for his son, it was necessary that he should embark with the first fleet. "The lovers are young enough," he added, "to wait two or three years, at which period Hector's engagement will terminate, when I hope also to visit my native land, and witness the union of my boy with the daughter of my earliest and most esteemed friend."

The heart of the good divine was lightened of a painful load by this communication, and he further rejoiced that no engagement had taken place between the lovers, which might have fettered their liberty, though it could not have endangered their peace throughout life; little was he aware of the midnight escapade of his pupil, or the solemn vows of never-ending love and fidelity the youthful objects of his paternal anxiety had pledged to each other.

The absence of Hector, who was an universal favorite, diffused a gloom over the household at the Rectory.- Gertrude, habituated to self-control, suppressed her own sorrow, in order to administer to the amusement of her father. She supplied the place of his pupil at the chess-board, became the companion of his morning walks, and read to him in the fine summer evenings in a romantic grotto at the extremity of the garden.

During those hours, however, which Gertrude could call her own, she would hurry to those spots, consecrated by the tenderest and most endearing recollections; where, with Hector for her companion, she had enjoyed pure and unalloyed happiness—for it was a happiness unmixed with fears for the future.

Thus passed the autumn and winter after the departure of Hector; but when

April, with its sunshine and its showers, began to deck the fields and meadows with the flowers and foliage of early spring, the hope of a letter from her lover created a restless anxiety on her bosom. Though aware that weeks and months must elapse before she could receive news from Madras, yet he had promised to write from the Cape, or by any vessel they might hail in their course. Daily she scanned the shipping-list, started at the sound of the postman's horn as he passed through the Village of St. Jude, only to meet with a new disappointment.

About this period, the anxiety of Gertrude was fated to take a new direction, or rather fears for the life of her parent were added to those she entertained for the weal, of her far distant lover. Compelled to undertake a hasty journey to London, in consequence of the failure of the banker who held the property of his late wife in trust for her daughter, he found on his arrival that his ruin was complete—that he had eluded the vigilance of his creditors, and sought a refuge beyond the Atlantic.

The Rector bore this reverse of fortune with the fortitude of a Christian, consoled with the conviction that Gertrude would not be less prized by St John because she came portionless to his arms; and, without unnecessary delay, he proceeded on his homeward return.

His affectionate daughter, grieving little for the loss of fortune, was dreadfully alarmed at the changed aspect of her father. He imputed the alteration to fatigue, and retired early to his chamber. A low fever soon developed itself; and, in spite of the most unwearied attentions of his child, and the most eminent medical attendance, the disease proved fatal, and at the termination of a few weeks, the Rector of St Jude became an inhabitant of the tomb.

His bereaved daughter sunk for a while beneath the afflicting stroke; but roused by the appearance of the new incumbent, she hastened, with the aid of an old friend of her father's to set about the necessary preparation for

leaving the Rectory. The last night she spent beneath its roof was to her a night of acute and overwhelming agony, and with the dawn she left the home of her birth, and returned to the cottage of her aged nurse, in a neighboring hamlet.

Loved and respected by his flock, the orphan daughter of the Rector lacked no invitations from several families in the neighborhood; but the lofty spirit, which had laid dormant in the bosom of Gertrude, in the season of prosperity, became developed and shone out in the hour of adversity. She resolved, rather than drag the heavy chain of dependence, to employ those talents and accomplishments which had amused and embellished her idle hours as a recourse in her present altered fortunes. Her nurse had a daughter married in London, to a respectable mechanic, and apprising Margaret of her intentions, and selecting a few cherished memorials of other days, she proceeded to the toll-house to await the coach in which a place had been secured.

As she left the cottage of the nurse, which had been rendered snug and comfortable by the bounty of her father, and as the aged dame stood at the door weeping, and calling down blessings on her head, she felt a sinking of the spirits, which she vainly struggled to subdue.

The season was in unison with her feelings; it was the early mom of a cold wintry day, unusually dark and dreary; and as she entered the coach, a drizzling rain beat heavily against the windows, and a dense fog enveloped the surrounding objects. The embrowned and yellow leaves fell fast from the trees, which skirted the road, and those which still clung to the half-naked branches, exhibited a lively image of decay. It was past midnight when the coach drove into the inn-yard; but late as it was, Margaret and her husband awaited the arrival of the orphan.

The sight of a familiar face produced a powerful revulsion in the feelings of Gertrude, and throwing her arms round the neck of Margaret, she burst into

tears. Johnstone, with genuine feelings of delicacy, left the parlor, and having procured a coach, he placed his wife and Gertrude inside, and mounting the box with the driver, directed him where to proceed.

The abode of Johnstone was situated in the outskirts of London, near to Finsbury Square, and while he assisted the coachman to remove the luggage, his wife conducted the weary traveller to a neat bed-room on the first floor, which was luckily untenanted when she received the letter of Gertrude.

After partaking of coffee, she undressed with the assistance of Margaret, and retired to court the repose her exhausted frame so much required. Sleep fled, however, from her pillow; and, when toward morning she sunk into a broken and unquiet doze, the painful thoughts which had occupied her waking hours recurred in broken and distorted images in her dreams; and when Margaret entered her chamber, she grieved to behold the ravages misfortune and grief had produced in her once blooming joyous countenance.

Resolved on the course she meant to pursue, Gertrude lost no time in advertising for the situation of a governess, and on the second morning after its appearance, a flaming chariot drove up to the door of Mrs. Johnstone's dwelling, from which alighted a portly dame, arrayed in the extreme of fashion. She inquired for the young person who wanted the situation of governess, on which Margaret ushered her into the little parlor, where sat Gertrude at work, in the unstudied negligence of a morning robe.

The stranger announced herself as the lady of Alderman-, and in want of a governess for their two daughters.

She did not question—indeed, seemed incapable of questioning Gertrude in regard to her fitness for the office, but she inquired as to terms and references as to character, with a coarseness which grated painfully on the

feelings of the bereaved orphan. But pertinaciously cherishing the belief that she was deserted by Hector,— perhaps, her alliance condemned by his father, she firmly resolved, to struggle with her feelings, and accept the independence offered to her.

"I am a stranger in London," she said, "but Mrs. Johnstone, who is the daughter of my nurse can satisfy your inquiries, or if her testimony is deemed insufficient, I can furnish you with the address of the agent of my late father." Gertrude hastily left the room, and sending in Margaret, hurried to her own chamber to compose her agitated spirits. When again summoned to the parlor, the kind-hearted woman—for her visitor was really such—took her hand, saying, " Poor thing, poor thing ; you shall come to us, and we will do everything in our power to make up to you for the home you have lost."

On the following Monday, Gertrude Montgomery became an inmate in the villa of Alderman-, at Streatham. Her pupils were unformed, but docile girls of ten and twelve years of age; and had received the rudiments of their education at a day-school in the vicinity.

The house was in sight of the public road, according to the approved plan of the London citizens; but the grounds behind were retired, and might be even termed extensive for the near vicinity of the metropolis.

Three years residence beneath the roof of the worthy citizen had blunted the first keen feelings of the orphan; but she still cherished deep within her bosom the image of her recreant lover.

At this period the death of the Fourth George, and the accession of William gave occasion to many festivals and rejoicings; and on the night of the coronation the family at the villa proceeded in their barouche to view the illuminations. After driving to the bank, mansion- house, and other public buildings in the city, they proceeded to the west-end of the town. Opposite

to the Admiralty, so great was the crowd, that for more than half an hour, the carriage could not move amidst the joyous multitude. The lone orphan had flown in imagination to another hemisphere, and far different scenes, when a question from one of her pupils recalled her back to present realities, and she raised her eyes to see what had excited the attention of the lovely girl.

At this moment an exclamation of surprise from a party of pedestrians attracted her notice; but the next they were lost amidst the crowd, and the barouche at the same time moving forward, she could not obtain another glimpse of the strangers.

What to her could be the exclamation of a stranger? yet Gertrude felt a feverish and restless anxiety on the subject during the rest of the evening, and throughout the night.

Next morning, at an early hour she was summoned to the parlor, and, on entering, was clasped in the arms of Hector St John. All was explained—letters had miscarried, and the most persevering enquiries failed to throw light on the retreat of the orphan. It was, indeed, unknown to everyone, but her aged nurse, who before St John's arrival in Britain, had become the inmate of Margaret's dwelling.

Hector had never, for an instant, entertained a doubt of Gertrude; he imputed her retreat to its true cause—a desire to avoid the ostentatious sympathy of "giddy fashion and low-minded pride," in her altered fortunes. But having found her, he protested that never should they part again. Their early engagement was communicated to her protectors, and one month after their accidental meeting the lovers were united in the presence of the worthy couple, who had acted like kind parents to the bereaved orphan.

It was not long before Colonel St. John arrived from the East. He purchased a handsome estate, on which he insisted that the young pair should reside,

reserving only a suite of apartments for himself. Years of unalloyed felicity have flown over the heads of Gertrude and her husband, who still live surrounded by a family of beauteous sons and daughters. X.

Nothing sets so wide a mark between the vulgar and the noble soul as the respect and reverential love of womanhood. A man who is always sneering at woman, is, generally, a coarse profligate, or a bigot—no matter which.



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THE BELEAGUERED CASTLE.

by H. J. VERWOB.

The castle had already been beleaguered a week, and the hopes of the besieged daily waxed fainter and fainter. The friends who had stood by the gallant old Lord. Derwent when the fortunes of his house were high, had deserted him in the hour of his extremity, and left him to contend alone against the bitterest enemy of his house, an enemy whose hereditary hatred was now inflamed by the refusal of the old Baron to purchase an amnesty by sacrificing his only daughter to the arms of his foe. That daughter had been betrothed years before to a young kinsman of Lord Derwent, who was now on a crusade to the Holy Land, and though nearly two summers had come and gone" since intelligence had been received from the good Knight, yet the Baron would have remained firm to his word, even if the suit of his foe had not been, as it was, repulsive to his child. So he had sent back a refusal to the proud De Courtenay, and when the latter threatened to harry his land and lordship unless he retracted the answer, the chivalrous old lord, although conscious of his inability to contend with De Courtenay, had replied by a bold defiance.

His foe had proceeded to execute his threat, unchecked by the interposition of the royal hand, for the king himself was a prisoner in Germany, and his unworthy brother John permitted his followers, of whom De Courtenay was one, to pursue their own schemes of revenge or aggrandizement unchecked. Thus the foe of the good Baron had met hitherto no check to his rapacity. He had threatened to harry the lands of Derwent—and fearfully had he executed his threat! Manor after manor had been laid waste, village after village had been burned, and its inhabitants slaughtered or made prisoners, and now the bold father, fighting to the last with desperate bravery, had been driven into his last stronghold, which he was vainly attempting to defend, with an armful of men, against almost countless numbers.

The siege had already continued a week, and all hope of succor from the old allies of his house, had long since been given over by the Baron. The provisions of the garrison had been exhausted, and the few Knights left in Derwent's train, were now met in the great hail to consult with their leader, respecting the course to be pursued.

It was a sad and melancholy group. There were the war-worn and discomfited Knights, their countenances betokening the extremity to which they were reduced —there was the grey haired Baron, unable wholly to conceal his fears, and yet unwilling to discourage his followers by betraying any symptoms of anxiety—and there too was the daughter, the innocent cause of the peril in which all were placed, tenderly gazing up into her father's face, and by that silent display of emotion filling every heart of the group with a renewed determination to perish or preserve her.

"I would, Amy," said the Baron, putting back the fair hair from his child's eyes, and gazing into her face with all a father's affection, " that you had staid in your bower with your maidens, and not come here to listen to the extremity to which we are reduced. Even now it is not too late for you to retire—the desperate discussions of brave men in peril are scarce fit for maiden's ears."

"Not so—not so, father," interrupted the daughter, "a noble maiden should ever be the first to hear counsel in a moment like this, especially when it is for her that the peril is to be encountered. But this is not all. I have heard the proposal of De Courtenay to withdraw his forces even now, if I am given up. Therefore have I left my bower and joined you in the hall. And now hear me," she said, speaking clearly and slowly, as one who has come to some fixed determination speaks, "I have too long remained silent, ay! until I have suffered these brave men to be brought into this extremity, and now it becomes me to speak. It is apparent that no earthly power can prevent this castle from falling into the enemy's hands—then why protract a useless resistance? I know what you will all say," she continued, seeing that several were about to speak—"that I will thus fall into the hands of De Courtenay. Well—be it so. Can further resistance prevent this? Then why bring ruin needlessly on all? If, by protracting the defence, we could ensure succor, then might I listen to you; but no such hope of relief exists. A prey to the spoiler I must be, then let me be the sacrifice, but let these innocent men escape."

For a moment her hearers were speechless at the generosity of her proposal. Then every voice was lifted up against it.

"No," exclaimed a veteran Knight, "never will we desert you—we would be recreant Knights if we should. By our hopes of salvation we will, one and all, die in your defence."

This gallant speech was welcomed with shouts by the other Knights until the old hall rung with their enthusiasm.

"I knew, noble Knights," said the Baron, when the tumult had partially subsided, and his voice betrayed no little emotion as he spoke, "I knew what your answer would be to the insulting proposal of De Courtenay. But I was resolved that you should hear and decide for yourselves. I little thought that

my child would be here to make the proposal for herself, but I thank you again and again for your enthusiasm in her favor. I am an old man and my days are numbered; and all I regret is that I may not be able ere I die to reward you for this day's devotion. But since we are all determined, let us give an answer to the foe, and then resume our place on the walls. De Courtenay will now storm the place at all points, and we must depend on God and our good right arms. As for you, Amy, hie to your chamber and there offer up prayers for us."

The Baron strove in speaking to assume the semblance of one in whom some hope, still lingered, but it was evident that he did not deceive either his child or his followers. All knew that the castle could not hold out against another attack. But the Knights were resolved, like brave men, to die at their posts, while Amy, although she made a second attempt to be heard, saw that her defenders would not listen to her proposal. In silence, therefore, they left the great hall; but as the father parted from his daughter, he pressed a last kiss on her now trembling lips—those lips which he never expected again to caress in this world.

The refusal of the besieged to accede to the terms offered to them was hailed by a low growl of rage on the part of the assailants, and instantly the foe commenced, from all quarters, an attack on the castle. Thrice already had they assailed it, but this time they rushed forward with a fury fourfold greater than on either former occasion. In vain the beleaguered men-at-arms met them at every turn—in vain missiles of every sort were hurled down on the heads of the assailants, the forces of De Courtenay soon gained a footing on the outer wall, and the brave defenders were driven to the Keep as their last resort. Here the Baron collected his melancholy band, and made ready for a desperate defence of his last stronghold. Already his little band was terribly thinned, but its stem resolution was unabated. He glanced around it anxiously as the trumpets sounded to the charge, and his heart died within him when he surveyed its scanty number, but at this instant, happening to cast his eyes on the opposite horizon, he fancied he saw

something glittering feu: off in the sun, like a row of spears.

" Michael," he said, eagerly, to a stout soldier beside him, "look off by yonder wood, just on the brow of the hill, what see you?"

" They seem like spears glancing in the sun—pray God they may be friends."

"Amen!" said the Baron, and the onset again began.

Fierce and furious was the fight. The assailants were hot for the blood of their stubborn opponents—the defenders of the castle fought with the fury of desperate men. The Keep seemed impregnable. Onset after onset was made on it by the foe, and each onset was repulsed by the desperate defenders.

Meanwhile the Baron had communicated his discovery to no one except to the soldier, and on him he had enjoined silence; for he was unwilling to raise the hopes of his followers without cause. In the intervals of the fight he turned his eyes toward the approaching cavalcade, and it was with unbounded joy that he at length fancied he perceived a well known banner. He was not mistaken. Almost at the same instant a message arrived from his child, who kept watch at the highest loophole of the Keep, that the approaching cavalcade bore more than one friendly pennon. The news was now communicated to the defenders indiscriminately, and though the conflict did not slacken, each man fought with renewed vigor. The coming succor had now become discernible from the enemy's camp, and the foe wavered in his assault, and prepared to resist this new enemy. But after a moment's hesitation the attack was renewed with even greater vigor. At this moment too the approaching cavalcade became hid by an intervening elevation.

" They must know our extremity and will spare no time in coming up," said the Baron, exhorting his followers to withstand this new assault, " and lo!

there they come, dashing over the hill—the Lord be praised: they are really friends, and there is my kinsman's banner from Palestine in the van."

It was even so. The young Knight had returned opportunely to his country, and hearing of his uncle's strait had hurried by forced marches to succor him. He saw at once that he had come at a critical moment, and dashing down the hill, he charged with his squadron into the very heart of the assailants. The combat was short but fierce. The forces of the young Knight were large, and they were burning to avenge a wrong done to the kinsman of their leader; while the assailants were weakened by their losses, and dispirited by the succor thus afforded to their foes. The forces of De Courtenay soon broke and fled, while he himself fell before the hand of the young Knight. The confusion was completed by a rally made by the besieged.

Our pen cannot do justice to the meeting of the long separated lovers. We will drop a veil over it, simply saying that Amy never forgot this last day of the Beleaguered Castle.

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THE TWO PORTRAITS.

TRANSLATED FROM THE FRENCH.

"Et quelque lieu que soit cette figure adorable, quelque corps qui la porte, quelque main qui l'ait faite, elle aura tous vœux de mon cœur. Oui, ma seule folie est de discerner la beauté; mon seul crime est d'y être sensible. Il n'y a rien là dont je doive rougir."—

(Pigmalion) J. J. Rousseau.

In the Rue Saint Lazare, at the corner of the Rue Laroche-foucauld, there is a large, very fine-looking house, with its upper apartments so arranged, as to be admirably suited for the studio of a painter. It was at the gate of this very house that toward the middle of March in the past year, an elegant carriage was observed to draw up. The carriage door opened, and a young lady instantly descended from it. You could tell by the first glance that she was in second mourning. Her robe was of pearly grey, and over it she wore a satin pelisse of the same color, bordered with chinchilla. There was, too, a black veil over her chapeau de soie blanche. In short, her dress displayed her wealth and her taste. Before quitting her carriage she had sent her footman to enquire if the painter M. Alfred Louval was at home, and if so to announce her. She was told that he was in his studio, at the top of the house. She proceeded thither, and as the Countess de Lucy was not much accustomed to this species of exercise, she mounted slowly, either to take breath, or to reflect upon the course that she should adopt. The lady was twenty-four years of age, she had a large fortune in her own right, and she was the widow of a Ministro Plenipotenziare.

While she was deliberating, she encountered the artist upon the stairs. He had descended to meet her, and stuttered out excuses that his profession compelled him to seek the best light. Surprised at this meeting, and still more surprised when she beheld the features of the gentleman, the Countess de Lucy remained perfectly silent, and mechanically followed the young gentleman, who seemed to be still more surprised, and even still more agitated, than the lady.

It is not, however, for any considerable length of time, that a woman can be deprived of her presence of mind, and thus it happened that no sooner was the Countess in the sitting-room of the artist, than she recovered her self-possession, and thus explained the object of her visit.

"The motive, sir," she said, "that has induced me to visit you is one that

would very probably induce man or other women to keep away from you. I have seen your works at the exhibition. You are, I perceive, the pupil of M. Ingres, and you tread in the footsteps of your master. I have seen your portraits of the Duchess de O — s, and the Countess N—, both of-whom

I know very well, and I was able to remark in their likenesses, even the minutest defects of the originals."

" I do not know, Madam, whether I am to interpret your words into an epigram or an eulogium."

" Do not take me, sir, as saying anything else but what I think. In my eyes, a perfect resemblance constitutes the first merit of a portrait. You smile, and perhaps it is a heresy in the Catholic creed of painting. But then remember, that I speak as a woman, and do not pretend to judge as an artist In fine, I am particularly glad to see my own features copied without any flattery, and with—all their imperfections."

" Imperfections! Madam I shall find it very difficult to discover them."

"A truce to compliments, sir; tell me, will your numerous occupations allow you to give me a few sittings !"

Louval replied that he was completely at the service of the Countess de Lucy; and that he would see her at her hotel any day she should choose to name. She then expressed a desire to see some of his pictures that had not been yet exhibited; and that she observed had all their canvas backs turned to the spectator. He turned the surface of them all but one . She praised all that she did see—and what delicious flattery was this for their author! At length she observed that there was the one not turned. She asked why it was not, and he seemed to be greatly embarrassed by the question.

" Is it," said she, " such a picture as that a lady ought not to look at it!"

" Not at all."

" Why, then, have you it so carefully concealed !"

" It is a m?re study—a study that I made for myself —for myself alone."

That is to say, that no one else is worthy of looking at it"

" Ah! Madam do not think me guilty of such vanity."

During this short dialogue her servant, thinking it would gratify his mistress to see the picture, turned it round ; but on seeing it, the Countess shrieked with amazement, and then in an angry tone she said to the painter—

" Tell me, sir, how come you to be the possessor of that portrait—a portrait of me, for which I never sat!"

" It is not your portrait," replied Louval, greatly agitated.

« You blush, sir. For pity sake tell me—explain to me—how or by what means it is you have caught my resemblance so exactly—you, that I believe, have never, until now, in all your life, seen me."

"It is perfectly true, Madam, that until this day, I never had the honor of knowing you."

" Cease, I pray you, this dissimulation. It does not very well become a man of honor, and, I trust, a gentleman."

" I have said, and I still tell you the truth. It is not at all a portrait. It is the study of a Madonna, that I have made after a picture of the Italian school."

" But the costume is modern."

" It is pure invention."

There appeared to be such perfect candor in the manner of Louval, that the Countess began to think she had wronged him when she thought of asking, where the original of his study was to be found.

"In Paris itself," answered Louval; "It is in the museum of M. Aguado; and you can yourself ascertain the truth of my assertion."

The young portrait painter then assured the lady, that this museum, now one of the finest in the world, was open to the public every Wednesday and Friday, and that as she had expressed a doubt of his assertion, he would be happy in waiting on her next day, in order that he might see, that with her own eyes she could be convinced of the truth of his assertion. Now, there would be some rashness in affirming that this pretext for paying a visit, appeared to the Countess a very plausible one, but this it is sufficient to know, that the offer of M. Louval was not rejected. She seemed ill at ease, and soon left the artist's studio followed by her servant. Upon her return to her hotel she directed the strictest inquiries to be made as to the conduct, morals, manners, and family of Louval, and the result was that she learned he was a young man universally respected, that he was admitted into the best society in Paris, that his family were respectable, and many of its members had acquired a high name in different professions. Why did the Countess make these inquiries? Was it because she had promised to go to a museum in company with an artist?

Then, on the other hand, Louval was so taken up with the visit that he had just received, and particularly with his appointment for the next day, that he left his studio in haste, and immediately set on foot inquiries- respecting the Countess de Lucy. He learned that she was the daughter of an old general of the Emperor's —that she was now more than a year left a widow, by the

Count de Lucy, who had died in a foreign country, where he filled a high diplomatic office—that the Countess had passed the entire time of her mourning in retirement. These facts explained to the young painter why he had never seen the Countess de Lucy ; but there were a great many other facts that he did not know, and that he was destined to be acquainted with.

We might dilate, if we chose, upon the visit paid by the Countess and the painter to the Museum of M. Aguado. It is sufficient to say that there the Countess saw the Madonna of Andrea del Sarte; she saw enough of resemblance in features to herself, to prove that the artist had been telling her truth. After some interviews

she told him, that she desired a proof of his skill in making ancient saints look like persons now living, and to his astonishment she showed him the portrait of a Spanish monk, in an attitude of the most fervent prayer, and the Spanish saint he at once saw had some resemblance to himself.

" Draw for me," said she, " from this, your own likeness; and if success crown your efforts, then I will be convinced, that you have not invented a fable for the purpose of justifying, in my eyes, your illegitimate possession of my portrait."

" I submit myself to your will, Madam," replied M. Louval,— " and may my obedience be to me as if it were inspiration."

When the work was finished, it obtained the approbation, without the slightest reserve, of the Countess de Lucy. " He may know his own face thoroughly well," said the Countess, " from having so often looked at it—but how could he have divined mine. There is certainly predestination in it." And this suggestion made the Countess think a great deal. As to Louval he did not know how to speak or to be silent In his perplexity, he retained a declaration that was on his lips, and to take him from his embarrassments, he eagerly pressed upon the lady permission to commence her portrait But,

notwithstanding, she declined doing so for a fortnight to come.

During that interval love was making rapid progress in the heart of Louval, and the Countess felt that the artist was not indifferent to her. Such were their mutual feelings when the lady's portrait was begun— but never yet was painter slower in his work. He had always something to alter— something to amend—something to change—and, at length, the Countess somewhat maliciously said to him—

" You are going on very well; but still you do not surpass—perhaps you do not equal, that study picture of yours, which you began and finished as if it were at a glance."

" I agree with you, Madam. The work that I then regarded as the mere production of chance, I am now disposed to attribute to destiny. Know, then, that when I first saw the Madonna of Andrea del Sarte, I was seized with an involuntary trembling, and I cried out—

' Here is the very type of the female who is to decide my fate,' and never did I enjoy repose but until my hand had traced, after the same manner, that delicious head, the portrait that you considered as yours. A new Pygmalion, I became enchanted with my own work— and, like him, I have, too, seen it animated with the breath of life, when you appeared before me. But this thought disturbs my reason—pardon, Madam, pardon an unhappy—"

"I excuse you, and I thoroughly comprehend you," replied the Countess with emotion. "All is now explained—and I do not see in it any thing more strange than that which has happened to myself."

" What do you mean, Madam?"

"It is, really, a most extraordinary coincidence."

"Speak—I beseech of you to speak."

" Well, then—as to that Spanish painting, from which you have made your own portrait—"

" Go on."

"My father brought it from Andalusia, where he had been a long time with the army, and it was placed in the chamber where I was born. As I grew up, it attracted my observation; and it was before that head, so animated as it seems, with a lively faith, that my parents made me say my prayers every day. Little by little I took pleasure in gazing upon it; and at a later period, in my girlish illusions, I accustomed myself to think that Heaven would send me a husband whose face would be like to that in the picture."

"Well?"

"Alas! I was very much deceived. The man to whom my hand was given had neither the youth, nor the features of the holy monk, under whose patronage I had, in some manner, placed myself. My father, finding that his death was approaching, and having but a small patrimony to leave me, wished, before he died, to see me married. I was just eighteen when he proposed to unite me to his best friend, who was a man of high rank, and had an annual income of a hundred thousand francs. Ought I—could I refuse? I obeyed—I accepted the husband, as if he were my second father, and soon the only one. For six years we lived together, and his affection to me was paternal. Even in his last moments, it did not abandon him. 4 Amelia,' said he to me, 1 you made a great sacrifice when you espoused a man who was more than twice your age—whose youth had long departed from him, and whose constitution was broken down by the cares and anxieties inseparable from a political life. By your angelic sweetness, you spread a charm over a most ill-assorted union. Permit me, then, to give you a proof of my gratitude. I leave to you the entire disposition of my fortune,

and I also engage you to divide it with a husband worthy of your choice. You are still young—you can still be happy, and you require a protector. "When, then, the time of your mourning is passed, follow my advice—my last advice, and never forget your old friend.' "

Louval threw himself on his knees before the Countess, who told him that was not the precise moment for fulfilling the wishes of her husband.

" Ah !" he exclaimed, " it is not for a poor artist that such bliss is reserved."

"Do not so express yourself, Louval," she replied, " for great talents are on a level with the very highest position in society."

In a few weeks afterward " the Spanish Monk," and

" the Italian Madonna" might be seen together in the collection of M. Aguado, where they still remain. As to those who so strongly resembled them, they were about the same time married, and never since have they wished to be separated from each other.

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THE EQUAL DOOM.

TRANSLATED FROM THE SPANISH.

It was under the reign of him, who has been commonly as well as vulgarly, called " Peter the cruel," that two men of a mean aspect, departed one evening from Toledo. They were both on horseback, both enveloped in long mantles, and directed their course toward the Tagus. They proceeded by the banks of the river for some time, and then, as the sun was setting, sheltered

themselves in a sort of ambushade, near to the solitary habitation of a shepherd, who had but recently arrived in that part of the country, from New Castile. As the night closed in, the bells of an approaching mule were heard in the path of the valley where these men were concealed. They rushed out from behind the hedge, where they had established the ambushade, stopped the mule, laid hold of the young girl that was on its back, and placing her behind one of themselves, in despite of her resistance, they galloped back with her to Toledo.

The valley for a few moments was filled with the cries, and sent back the echo of " father—dear father— father - Bartholomew." These were the cries of the maiden as she struggled in the arms of the villains who held her. Soon her extreme fear, her despair, and her agony, combined with the menaces of the ruffians, deprived her of the power of utterance, and in a short time, nought was heard in the path of the valley but the trot of the mule and the tinkling of its bells.

Although this deed of violence was perpetrated at a considerable distance from any habitation, still the piercing shrieks of the victim had reached the ears of Bartholomew. He recognized the voice of his daughter Inez; he flew to her assistance, and he was soon, by his activity and address, on the track of those who had carried her away.

It was two hours afterward, when, breathless and covered with dust, paleness on his forehead, and the wildness of a maniac in his eyes, the father dismounted at the door of a house in the Plaza Mayor at Toledo. He forced his way through all obstacles, and he found himself in the presence of -the weeping Inez, and of a stranger, whose ironical smile seemed at once to insult the grief of the one, and the outrage done to the other.

"Who are you?" said the stranger, planting himself between the father and daughter.

" Her father," answered Bartholomew, repressing as well as he could, the feeling of anger that he experienced; " her father, and you are a scoundrel."

"Do you know to whom you are speaking?" added the unknown, in a menacing tone.

"To a base villain, I am quite sure," replied Bartholomew, repelling him with his robust arm. "But I must first look to my daughter. You and I can settle accounts afterward." And saying this, he laid hold of his daughter's arm for the purpose of leading her to the door of the apartment in which this scene passed.

" Miserable fool!" instantly exclaimed the stranger, furious at beholding that he was about being deprived of his victim.

They were the last words that Bartholomew heard; for the miscreant who had uttered them struck him with a poignard, and stretched him dead at his feet.

The news of this horrid murder, rendered still more odious by the circumstance that had preceded it, caused a great commotion in the city, and it was in vain that the nobility, to whose class the murderer belonged, endeavored to shelter him from the pursuits of justice. The guilty man was arrested in his flight, and incarcerated in one of the prisons of Toledo.

In the fourteenth century, it was well known what were the advantages to an accused of dilatory proceedings in criminal prosecutions. Thus it was that it was not until six months after the perpetration of his crime, that Don Micida, the murderer of Bartholomew was brought before the tribunal, which, if possible, he would have avoided. He had prepared for his defence several perjured witnesses. One swore that he had seen him some miles from Toledo on the night the murder took place. A second deposed that he was so ill the day before it, that he had prepared himself for death; and a

third that he had been in his company all the day and night on which this atrocious crime had been perpetrated. No one believed these witnesses; but then the culprit had powerful friends, and his interest blunted the edge of the sword of justice. The sentence pronounced upon him was equivalent to an acquittal. It was that he should lose his privileges as a noble for one year, and pay a trifling fine. On the payment of the latter, he was instantly restored to liberty.

But at the very moment in which the assassin of Bartholomew escaped the chastisement that was due to his crime, his irrevocable condemnation had been pronounced by a tribunal on which he had not at all calculated; and he did not long enjoy impunity from his crime. The very next day, in the broad light of the sun, and in the most populous quarter of the city, as he was about to enter the palace of one of his brother nobles, he fell mortally wounded by two stabs of a poignard— " One," said his murderer, " is given you for the sake of Inez, and the other for the death of Bartholomew."

The man who had slain Don Midici did not make the slightest effort to escape. He cast from him the blood-stained weapon. He folded his arms on his breast, and without attempting the slightest resistance, he permitted himself to be arrested. His detention in prison was not of very long duration. The criminal proceedings against him went forward with the greatest celerity, and he had soon to appear before the very same judges who had acquitted the assassin of the shepherd. When desired to tell his name, he answered "Paul," and upon the question of the judge, as to whether he was the originator of the murder committed upon the person of Don Micida, he answered, " Its originator, I am not—its executor, I demand then, when called on for his defence, he confined himself to the simple recital of facts. " I am," said he, " the brother of Inez, and the son of Bartholomew—the one was insulted, and the other assassinated, by the wretch on whom I have only done, that which justice was bound to do."

Such a pleading stood not in need of any oratory. Even though it was

extremely laconic, its meaning was so plain, and its eloquence so heart-stirring, that it was calculated to excite in men of the dullest sense, the desire to save the unhappy man. But the remarkable answers of Paul, and the nature of his defence were not suited to dispose favorably toward him, the judges who had pronounced the scandalous acquittal of Don Micida. Besides, Paul had taken vengeance for the injury done to him, by shedding the blood of one of the nobles, and Paul, therefore, was condemned to death!

It was upon the very day of his condemnation, that a woman, pale and haggard, all in tears, and her hair in disorder, found her way into the gardens of the Alcazan. She did so at the very time that the beautiful and the generous favorite, Maria Padilla, was taking her usual promenade. The wretched woman cast herself at the feet of her, who was the beloved of Peter the Cruel.

Maria, brilliant and happy at the sight of the miserable creature, who was prostrated at her feet, removed the light veil of lace in which she was enveloped, cast upon the suppliant a look of kindness, and in a compassionate voice, said to her—

" Rise up, my poor woman. It is only before God that we ought to kneel. What can I do for you 1"

"Generous lady-"

Sighs interrupted the suppliant, and prevented her from proceeding.

"Take courage," said Maria, with the same sweetness of manner. " You are unhappy, and misfortune is a title to my protection. Tell me, without fear, what is the cause of your alarm."

" It is the fate of Paul—of my son, lady."

" Can I be of any service to him?"

"Oh! yes, gracious Madam."

" Speak—ask what you wish."

" Oh! they have condemned him."

" Condemned him, do you say? To what?"

" Pardon me, Madam, if the word dies on my lips—it is so dreadful to say it."

" Poor mother! To death, perhaps."

" Yes—yes—lady," said the trembling mother of Paul.

" And what is his crime,?" asked Maria.

" Oh! he is not at all guilty, dear lady. He is so good, so kind, so affectionate a son. He has always so loved his father and his sister, and me, too, Madam. It is his filial piety that has destroyed him; but I swear before Heaven, he is not guilty. Pity, then—oh, pity and mercy for him, lady."

" Silence," said Maria, with an evident expression of interest, "The King is coming this way. Give me your petition, and remain at some distance from us. I shall have you called, if it be necessary."

Saying these words, Maria turned her steps toward an avenue of orange trees, where she perceived the King, who eagerly advanced to meet her.

" Peter," said she, presenting him the petition of Paul, " here is an excellent opportunity of making yourself agreeable to me."

"I am glad of it, Padilla—then tell me what it is."

"It concerns an unhappy man, who has been condemned to death, and in whose fate I am interested. You will make use of one of the noblest prerogatives of Royalty in his regard—you will show that you are merciful. Is it not so, my love!"

Peter had approached his favorite with a smile of satisfaction, which frequently softened the severe expression of his countenance when in her society; but, on hearing the words that she had just pronounced, he knit his brows, and slightly frowned. The prince piqued himself upon the exhibition of a great respect for justice, and it must be owned that he gave numerous examples of his disposition in that respect. Did the condemned, in whose favor Maria interested herself, deserve any favor to be shown to him or not? Such was the question Peter put to himself at the moment that Paul's petition was put into his hand. The petition ran thus:—

"Sire! you have punished in the severest way a noble duke, because his servants, at his desire, had beaten a poor tradesman for asking the amount of his bill. You had another sawed in two for the atrocities he had committed in a family, into which he had been introduced in the character of a clergyman; and you have even applied to yourself the extreme severity of your justice, in knocking off the head of one of your statues in the public square, because some years before you had stabbed a soldier, and you have taken care of the witness who had the courage to denounce you. Why, then, ought not Paul to find at the Alcaza justice and protection? At the Alcaza, where they weigh in the same balance the weak and the strong. My father fell by the poignard of Don Micida, and the latter was acquitted by the judges. I slew the murderer of my father, and the same judges have condemned me to death. It is an iniquitous sentence, and against it I appeal with perfect confidence to you. Paul."

Peter, upon reading this singular production, instantly gave orders to one of his officers to bring before him, without a moment's delay, the son of Bartholomew. The order fortunately arrived in time, for when the officer presented it, Paul was about to be led forth to execution. Instead of being conducted to the scaffold, he was introduced to the palace of the Alcaza, and presented to the King.

" You are the man called Paul," said his Majesty.

" I am, Sire."

"Why was it that Don Micida assassinated your father?"

« because my father was about taking from him my sister Inez, whom Micida had carried away by force and against his will."

"Then it was he who committed such a villainy that slew the outraged father."

" It was, Sire."

"Very well. And the assassin, you say in your j petition, was acquitted."

"Yes, Sire. He was restored to liberty, and the only punishment inflicted on him was suspending him from his privileges as a noble, for an entire year.

"Very well. And you not considering that the punishment was adequate to the offence committed, inflicted justice with your own hand."

" Yes, Sire."

" That was bad. What is your trade, Paul 1"

" A cordwainer, Sire."

" Very well. Then I, the supreme judge of the judges of Castile, annul the sentence condemning you to death. I say that the punishment ought to be the same, for all crimes of the same nature. I, therefore, restore you to liberty, but I forbid you making boots and sales for an entire year."

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THE STAGE BOX BEAUTY.

by Mrs. M. V. Spencer.

CHAPTER I.

Herat Beauchamps was the son of a decayed gentleman, who, after the due number of attacks of gout; died and left his only child to starvation. But from this evil the young orphan was preserved by a maternal uncle, who, being an old bachelor, and possessing an income far beyond his wants, at once took charge of our hero, and resolved to educate, perhaps to adopt him. Accordingly the young orphan was provided for at a public school^ and subsequently at an academy, until his uncle's death, an event which happened just as Beauchampe was entering on his fifteenth year. The death of his patron,.however, did not leave Henry unprovided for; indeed the world looked on it as rather a happy^event for our hero, since it left him the possessor of an estate worth ten thousand a year. The devise, however, was fettered with one condition. It was made a contingency necessary to the enjoyment of the estate by Beauchampe that he should marry a niece of his uncle, whom the kind hearted old man bad adopted a few years after he had

done the same act for Henry. This clause, however, afforded no uneasiness to any of the parties, since all reasoned that the young heir would only be too glad to take the estate encumbered by a lovely wife, for the protegee of the uncle, although Beauchampe had never seen her, bore the character of being exceedingly beautiful.

Accordingly Beauchampe grew up considering himself the possessor of his uncle's estate, as much as if it was already under his control. Ample provision had been made in the will for the education of the young man. As he was naturally of considerable ability, he passed through college with éclat, and at eighteen took his diploma at the head of his class. His guardian proposed that he should devote the three remaining years of his minority, which were generally devoted to the study of a profession, to travelling abroad; and accordingly Beauchampe sailed for Europe under the guidance of a tutor. Here he was absent for two years and a half. It cannot be supposed that travel was without its effect on his mind. But happily he had no common amount of sense, and he passed safely through the temptations of foreign life, without becoming either a fop or a buffoon. Naturally, however, of a poetic, we might say romantic temperament, he increased this tendency by loitering along the vine-clad hills of the Rhine, and listening to the legends of that fascinating region. But, although few men were more romantic at heart, his life of fashion when in the great cities of Paris or London, taught him to disguise his sentiments; and of all the gay companions he met in the salons of the great and proud, not one would have suspected his real character.

" Ah! De Burgh," said he, one morning in the Park at London, to a fashionable acquaintance, "you have got back from the continent, and I am glad of it, for I have to sail in a fortnight for New York."

" Indeed—why, I thought you were not going until the season was over, and here it has just begun. Are you serious !"

"Never more so in my life. Time has slipped away so rapidly of late that I find the period when I must be in America is close at hand—the more, since I received a letter from my guardian yesterday, in which he-hints at my approaching majority, and says it would be but polite for me to be at home ready to fulfil the betrothal which my uncle made for me."

"Ah ! I have heard of that—is the lady pretty?"

" She is said to be as beautiful as an Houri!"

" She brings you a fortune, my dear fellow, and that would raise a Gorgon into a Leda," said De Burgh, patting the neck of his restive steed. „

" Well, I don't know," said Beauchampe, "but that, if I had ever seen any one to love, I might give up fortune and all. You laugh incredulously. But you little know me. However, since I have never yet felt the passion I may as well marry my uncle's protegee as not."

" Ha—ha," said De Burgh, " you are quite resigned ! One would think you were about to suffer martyrdom. It is a good excuse—that inability to love. But come to the opera to-night, and we will test whether your heart is made of adamant."

" Why—is there a new prima donna, or is the queen to be there, or will there be a row—what is it I haven't gone near the opera for a week, having just come up today from Liverpool."

" I went there the hour after I reached town, and shall go there nightly until the opera closes, or this mysterious beauty disappears. Know then that a face appeared in the stage box last night which has set the town mad. Whose it was no one has been able to find out. The manager is deaf to bribes and prayers alike. All we can learn is that she is a guest of some friend of his. At any rate the face is new, and when a glimpse of it can be caught

behind the curtain you think you are looking on an angel's. Come to-night and see if your heart will prove unconquerable."

"I accept the challenge," said Beauchampe, and the two friends parted.

CHAPTER II.

"Is she not beautiful?" said De Burgh.

His companion did not seem to heed the question, but gazed, as if transfixed, up to the stage box, where a delicate hand might be seen holding back the curtain. A

minute before the face of the fair owner of that hand had been revealed for an instant; and it was that sight which had called forth the impassioned exclamation of De Burgh.

"Is she not beautiful?" he asked again.

"Heavenly!" was the response of Beauchampe, "when will she be visible again?"

The music went on. The prima donna sang her finest airs, and the orchestra thundered in at the chorus, until the house shook again with applause, but Beauchampe still remained gazing up at the stage box, seemingly unconscious of what was going on around him. That hasty glimpse at the face of the mysterious beauty had touched a new chord in his heart. Why did she so perversely keep herself secluded in the darkest corner of the box, revealing only the fair white hand which, but for the necessity of holding the curtain back, would doubtless have also sought the obscurity of her secluded seat? A half an hour at least had passed since that momentary glimpse of her face. At length when the prima donna had executed one of her most difficult airs, and while pit and boxes were resounding with

enthusiastic acclamations, the tiny hand slowly and stealthily drew back the curtain, just affording space for that unrivalled face to look down on the scene.

It was indeed a face to watch for, to dream of, to worship! Soft melting blue eyes, rivalling heaven's own azure; a brow whose transparency surpassed that of Parian marble; cheeks, whose pearly whiteness was saved from monotony by the rosy tint that suffused them; and tresses of that indescribable hue which seems auburn at night, but which when lit by a gleam of sunlight, assumes the hue of gold. Then the rich, ripe, pulpy lips, disclosing, when she smiled, teeth of such exquisite whiteness! This countenance, beautiful thus in repose, was rendered even more lovely when she spoke—as she did occasionally to a companion beside her—by the changing expression which flitted across her face, making it, as it were, a mirror in which every feeling of her soul was reflected. The subject of her conversation seemed an animated one, for her eyes would momentarily sparkle with merriment, and then her face would relapse again into a comparative repose, reminding the gazer of a quiet pool glimmering from light to shade as the sunshine shimmered down on it through the quivering leaves.

"Who can she be?" said Beauchampe, "I must discover her name. Raphael must have dreamed of such a face when painting his immortal Madonna, for only in that divine countenance is anything even approaching to this to be found."

"She is indeed seraphic," said De Burgh, "and I wonder not that she has interested you. Ah ! did I not say she would? But the curtain rises, and there comes the prima donna!"

But Beauchampe saw nothing save that angelic face. In vain the unrivalled Malibran poured forth her liquid melody—in vain the orchestra burst in with a magnificence which has never since been equalled, Beauchampe was

wholly insensible to the music, but, half hidden in his box, gazed entranced on the strange beauty. The fervor of his gaze, at length, appeared to attract the notice of her companion, for after a whisper betwixt the two and a glance at Beauchampe, the curtain was -once, more closed, and the stranger was visible no more that night. Not even the delicate fair hand was left exposed to fire the beholder with dreams of the still more lovely face.

Beauchampe left the house that night with a tumult of strange feelings at his bosom. He had spoken truly when he told De Burgh that he had never loved, for although a beautiful face had more than once made a momentary impression on his fancy, none had ever inspired him with the lasting emotion of love. But now he felt that he had at length been conquered. That face was his fate. For hours after he sought his couch, he lay thinking of this mysterious beauty, and when at length he fell into a troubled slumber, it was only to dream of that seraphic face, looking down, as he had seen it a few hours before, on the glittering scene beneath.

He rose at a late hour still more in love. His first duty was to enquire respecting the occupants of the stage box on the two preceding evenings, but here he found himself foiled. No one knew who the unknown beauty was, except the manager, and he was deaf to all inquiry.

The mystery hanging around the fair stranger only increased the passion of Beauchampe. The adventure was one which aroused his imaginative mind, and he surrendered himself at once to the seductive influence of his new feelings. At the earliest hour the next evening he was seated in a fashionable position to observe the unknown beauty, and he waited with a trembling heart for her appearance. At length a figure passed behind the curtain of the stage box, and in a few minutes that unrivalled face might be seen peeping modestly down on the scene below. It seemed to Beauchampe as if it was even more beautiful than on the preceding evening; especially when, as she turned to address her companion, she emerged a moment from the shadow of the box, so that the full blaze of the lustres shot across her rich auburn

tressses, producing an illusion as if a shower of gold had fallen on them. The look which she cast around the house was but momentary however; and ere the curtain rose she had retreated into the shadow of the box, and was no more visible, except when the enthusiasm of the house called her for an instant forward—seeming, in her lustrous beauty, to the eyes of the impassioned Beauchampe, like a meteor lighting up a dark and hopeless prospect.

CHAPTER III.

Night after night found Beauchampe at his post, gazing up at that curtained box with the adoration of an idolater to his divinity! Sometimes its unknown occupant was absent, and at other times she remained perversely invisible. But still the impassioned lover was more than once rewarded by a sight of that fair, lustrous face—and the glimpse, though it lasted but for a moment, afforded food for the thoughts and dreams of a week. Beauchampe no longer went in company with the gay De Burgh, but sought a secluded scat whence he might gaze unnoticed, and drink in the surpassing beauty of that face in selfish silence.

Thus passed a fortnight, and still all the efforts of Beauchampe to discover who the fair stranger was, had proved unavailing. More than once he had endeavored to follow her carriage home, but the vehicle had been as often lost in the press of equipages. He no longer thought of returning to America—at least not for the present. He was resolved first to discover who the mysterious beauty was, that had thus moved his heart for the first time to love, and engrossed every other feeling of his soul into one all absorbing passion.

The opera was about to close, for the prima donna had an engagement in Paris. Yet Beauchampe had made no approach to an acquaintance with the unknown beauty—indeed he was no further advanced toward it than on the first evening he saw her, since he did not even know her name or residence.

He determined to make a final effort to trace her.

He had just reached the carriage walk, on the last night of the opera, when he saw the manager approaching, with a lady on each arm, and, though the figures of both were closely shawled, Beauchampe's heart told him that the form of the sligher one was that of the fair stranger. This was the first time that he had succeeded in beholding her before she reached her carriage, and he fancied that he could see that her figure, shrouded as it was, was one of the most exquisite proportions. He saw her, however, only for a moment, ere she stepped into her carriage with her companion, when the manager bowed and the vehicle drove off. Hastily calling a hackney coach, Beauchampe sprang in and ordered the driver to follow the other carriage, but a distance sufficiently great to conceal his object. The carriage of which they were in pursuit, however, drove off so rapidly that it was with difficulty they could keep it in sight, in the devious course it pursued. But this velocity which, more than once, put the pursuers almost at fault, proved in the end a happy occurrence for the lover, since, in rapidly turning a comer the wheels of the carriage struck against a pile of stones and the vehicle was upset. Beauchampe, at this juncture, was but a short distance in the rear, and soon reached the shattered coach, from which he was the first person to extricate the sufferers. Both were much frightened, and the companion of the fair stranger, an elderly lady, had an arm broken. The young lady was, however, uninjured. Beauchampe proffered his services at once, sent the coachman for a surgeon, and handed the ladies into his own carriage, soothing and assisting the sufferer during the remainder of the ride, which happily for the injured lady was a short one. But to Beauchampe it was one of bewildering joy. He breathed the same air with her whom he had so long worshipped, and much as he had admired her beauty at a distance, he now admired her even more for the tenderness which she displayed toward the sufferer.

Beauchampe had the tact when they reached the house, to remain just so long as his services could be of value, and then to retire. The eloquent look of thanks with which the young lady rewarded him, filled him with a joy such

only as a lover can appreciate.

The next morning he called to enquire after the sufferer, and if he had been charmed by the few words which the fair stranger had uttered the night before, in terror and grief, how much more was he delighted by her conversation now that the smiles had resumed their place on her countenance, and all danger to her aunt had disappeared. Beauchampe sat entranced, until it suddenly occurred to him that he was protracting his visit beyond all etiquette. With a thousand good wishes for her aunt's recovery, therefore, he rose to take his leave.

" My aunt has charged me to return you her thanks for your timely assistance and kindness last night," said the young lady, with a sweetness that Beauchampe had never seen equalled, "and she hopes in a few days to be able to express her gratitude in person. I need not say," she continued with a bewitching frankness, and Beauchampe fancied her cheeks grew a shade more crimson as she spoke, " how glad we shall be to see you at any time!"

The lover left the house that day feeling as if he trod, not on earth, but air. That sunny countenance, those soft grateful eyes, the melodious accents of that voice filled his memory throughout the livelong day, and haunted his visions at night. He was irretrievably in love. The divinity whom he had worshipped at a distance had not disappointed him when he met her, but his chains were, if possible, tightened.

He had left his own card with the ladies on the night of the accident, but amid the confusion and alarm they had forgotten to acquaint him with their names. He had gathered, however, from the landlady—for the ladies were transient boarders—that the name of the elder was Mrs. Wareham. On his second visit he had learned that the younger one was a niece to the sufferer, and that she bore the same name. They were on a visit to the city, and as the aunt was an old friend of the manager's lady, they had accepted her

invitation to avail themselves of the stage box—and thus the difficulty of their being without a protector was got over.

"It was Edith's passionate love for music," said the aunt when she was convalescent, and had been able to descend to the drawing-room to thank Beauchampe, "which induced me to consent to this arrangement. We wished to remain as secluded as possible, but the dear child has ever been so kind to me that I could not deny her. And even now I do not regret it although it has cost me a broken arm."

Beauchampe had never thought to ask if Miss Ware-ham was fond of music, although he had noticed a harp standing in one corner of the room. He now petitioned for a song, and Edith modestly complied. As she bent over the instrument, displaying the full sweep of her magnificent neck and shoulders, while her azure eyes, humid with the emotions which the song awakened, were raised to heaven, Beauchampe thought, and justly, that he had never seen anything so lovely. She seemed another St. Cecilia, rapt with her own celestial thoughts. When the song ceased words failed him to express his admiration.

CHAPTER IV.

Beauchampe thought no longer of America, or of aught except Edith. He saw that she was such a one as he had often pictured to himself, but despaired of finding. She looked on everything with the eye of an enthusiast. Her heart seemed, in its warmth, to take in the whole universe. All things, in nature, were to her beauty and incense. For the first time, in his life, Beauchampe had met one with whom his soul could hold communion unreserved. His visits daily grew longer, and daily seemed, more acceptable to Edith; until, at his entrance, her heart would beat quicker and the true blood rush into her cheek. These signs met the eye of the lover and filled him with joy unutterable. Could it indeed be that she, whom he had worshipped so long at a distance, returned his love? Or was it not rather bliss too extatic to be

real? Yet the glad smile with which Edith met him assured him that her heart was his own. Oh ! how delicious were the hours they spent together. Books, music and conversation occupied their time, unless when silence, that bliss of love, would steal down on their souls. This could not continue long without a mutual revelation of feeling, and Beauchampe one evening seized the opportunity of a momentary ietc-d-tete to express his passion. The trembling and blushing Edith murmured a scarce audible assent to his impassioned declaration, and her lover catching her in his arms, imprinted his first kiss on her glowing cheek.

Let it not be supposed that Beauchampe had deceived his betrothed as to his fortune. It is true that, in the intoxication of his earlier acquaintance, he had wholly forgotten the clause in his uncle's will, by which he forfeited the estate, but he soon found that neither Edith nor her aunt knew of his expectations, and therefore when, on the morning after the scene we have just described, he asked Mrs. Wareham, as the protector of Edith, for the hand of her niece, he did not disguise from her that his fortune amounted to only a paltry five hundred a year, such being the income left to him by his uncle in case he refused to marry the lady to whom he had been betrothed. He expressed his determination, however, to adopt a profession at once, and with the sanguine hopes of youth, declared that in four years at furthest he would be able to claim his bride. The cooler years of Mrs. Wareham led her to be less sanguine of his immediate success, but he pleaded so fervently that she was at length forced to give a half consent. She promised that, while Beauchampe visited America, she would not interdict a correspondence betwixt the lovers; and that, if at the termination of the four years, Edith and Beauchampe should both remain unchanged, she would then consent to their union. But she would not permit any engagement at present.

" You are both young, my dear Mr. Beauchampe, and four years may work a great change in your feelings. You have hitherto enjoyed a handsome allowance, and lived in the expectation of a still more handsome fortune.

You have never yet—pardon me for saying it—acquired those habits of business which are necessary to one who has to make his own fortune; and, although now the unceasing toil of a profession seems light to you, yet your opinions may change, understand me I only say may, I speak frankly, as I would to my own child, for you have deeply interested me. Perhaps age has taught me to be less sanguine than you—at least it has acquainted me with the weaknesses of human nature."

There was much in this which grated harshly on Beauchampe; and yet nothing at which he could be offended. There was wisdom in every word which Mrs. Wareham had uttered, but a wisdom which seemed to the romantic lover a cold and almost repulsive prudence. His good sense had to acknowledge that she was right, although his heart would fain have pronounced her wrong.

"If such is your resolution," he said, "I must obey, although with a heavy heart. But you shall see that you judge me harshly."

"Not so, my dear young friend. I confess my heart is with you, but as the protector of Edith I must act with the world's prudence, if I would save myself from reproach. And in what do I oppose you? I permit you to correspond—you will thus constantly commune together—you say you will visit England once a year, —and at any hour you may claim Edith. At the same

time you will not be bound by a promise, and thus forced from a sense of honor to fulfil a pledge of which your heart might repent. Think of all I have said, and I know you will acquit me of any harshness.' But believe me, in any event, my dear Mr. Beauchampe, to be your true friend."

The lover saw that he could not change the resolution of Mrs. Wareham, and accordingly he was forced to submit Eager to put his plan in operation, he lost no time in engaging d passage to New York. We will not attempt to

describe his parting with Edith. Amid all her grief, however, there was no hope—hope for the future, bright and beautiful! She had not seen disappointment like Mrs. Wareham, and life was sunny and alluring before her. With the tear that dimmed her blue eye at parting, there was mingled a smile to cheer her lover, and bid him look forward to a happy meeting.

" Sweet girl," said Beauchampe to himself, as he drove away from the house, "she, at least, is not cold- hearted! She does not doubt my faith. Beautiful Edith, that smile is worth a world to me. And now for America!"

During the long voyage that ensued, for it was protracted to an unusual length, Beauchampe thought often of that parting smile. It was to him a sign of hope. When should he behold that smile again?

chapter v.

The first duty of Beauchampe, on returning to his country, was to acquaint his guardian with his resolution to abandon his fortune, since his heart could not endorse the vows which his uncle had made for him. The guardian was a man of the world, a cool old merchant of some sixty years of age, and he heard the determination of his ward with undisguised astonishment.

" What!—throw away ten thousand a year and a lovely girl, for a mere whim, a passion that will not outlast the leaves. Pooh ! Pooh! you are crazy, Beauchampe. You must not think of such a thing. Five hundred a year and a profession to support a family with!—my dear boy, you never can do it."

" But I have made up my mind, and am willing to abide by my resolution," said Beauchampe, with a little warmth, " besides if you were to see Miss Wareham," he could not call her Edith before the calculating merchant—" you would not wonder at my choice."

" And if you were to see Miss Harper, you would be cured of your romantic

notion. By Jove! if I were a young man I would move heaven and earth to win her. Why all the young men have been crazy about her, in the few weeks since she has finished her education and come out!—and here are you, actually refusing her and ten thousand a year to boot, without so much as having seen her. You deserve to be cut off without a shilling."

" But, my dear, sir, beautiful though she be, I do not love her!"

" But you could love her if you were willing. No one can see her without loving her," exclaimed the old man with some warmth.

"But I love another, and I am sure that Miss Harper would not wish me to bring her a cold unsympathizing heart. Her better nature must repel at being trafficked away as in a shambles!"

" Well—well, you must call on me to-morrow at my house, when we will talk the matter over again. You will think better of it by that time."

The next day Beauchampe paid his second visit to his guardian, and was received in the old man's library. The lover was firm, for the sweet face of Edith was continually in his memory, and could he barter her away for gold 1

" I have one last argument to urge," said the old man, as he followed his guest down the hall, pausing, while he spoke, at the parlor door, which he threw open, " here is Miss Harper, and I leave you to express your resolution to her." So saying the old gentleman retired, leaving Beauchampe thunder-struck in the hall.

His first impulse was to retire. But the young lady had heard his guardian's words, and he could not refuse the interview without rudeness. His situation was awkward in the extreme. But there was nothing left except to advance and extricate himself the best way he could from the dilemma. After a moment's hesitation, therefore, he stepped into the parlor, wondering in

what manner he should open this strange and embarrassing interview.

A female was sitting with her back toward him, half concealed by the rich curtains that shrouded the front windows. He felt satisfied that this was Miss Harper. For a minute she did not hear, or affected not to hear his footstep on the rich Wilton carpeting, and the embarrassed young man had nearly reached her side, before she seemed to be aware of his presence.

"Miss Harper!" said he, and then paused, unable to proceed.

The person turned around quickly and rose, revealing to the astonished gaze of Beauchampe the very counterpart of the features of the stage box beauty.

"Edith ! Miss Wareham ! Do I dream?"

"And you are determined to refuse me?" said she, with an arch smile.

That voice and look removed every doubt, and catching the sweet girl in his arms, he answered her by imprinting a kiss on her pouting lips.

"That's a practical argument," said the voice of his guardian, from the other parlor, "and has proved more conclusive than all my other ones. Ah! Beauchampe did I not tell you that my ward was irresistible?"

"Yes! my dear boy," said the voice of Mrs. Wareham, as that lady also appeared on the scene, "you have proved true. And now," she continued, smiling meaningly, "I give my consent to your betrothal."

Beauchampe turned from one to the other in an astonishment which was depicted on every lineament of his face, until the ludicrousness of his looks plunged the whole party into laughter, in which he too finally joined. When their mirth had subsided Mrs. Wareham took on herself to explain the

mystery, which was soon solved.

Miss Harper after her education had been completed Rad visited Paris, in order to perfect herself in the French language, under the charge of Mrs. Wareham, who was really her aunt Of this visit abroad, however, Beauchampe was ignorant The ladies were on their return to this country, by the way of London, when they visited the opera, in the manner we have narrated. The accident which happened to Mrs. Wareham had revealed to the ladies the fact that Mr. Beauchampe was none other than the individual to whom Edith had been betrothed. Eager to learn if he would love her for herself alone, the young lady, with her aunt's concurrence, had practised the innocent deception which resulted as we have detailed. It is necessary to state that immediately after Beauchampe sailed, the two ladies also took passage for America, where they arrived nearly a fortnight before the lover. The guardian of both entered at once into the scheme, and had played his part adroitly as we have seen.

A month later witnessed the union of Edith-and Beauchampe; and neither ever regretted the happy chance which brought them together in London.